

Monkey-Do CIC Co. No. 7117111 www.monkey-do.net
London & South-East leo@monkey-do.net
Bristol & South-West ben@monkey-do.net
Everywhere else vic@monkey-do.net



BOOKING MONKEY-DO FOR AN EVENT

Need to know information sheet

Our staff

Monkey-Do's staff have over ten years of experience and considerable expertise across arboriculture, rope access, environmental education and adventure play provision. All our staff are suitably qualified, experienced with working with children and CRB checked. We are insured to work with children in trees at heights of up to 10m, though we seldom reach half this height.

Our costs

We are a non-profit Community Interest Company, which in our case means we only charge for our labour, equipment, travel and insurance – enough to cover the costs of the job and our company's running costs. This usually amounts to around £650-800 plus transport per two-person team for a typical play-day within striking distance of London or Wiltshire, where our Directors are based. Our turnover is low enough that VAT does not apply.

This fee pays firstly for one of us to carry out a site visit to ensure the venue is suitable and to conduct a tree assessment from the ground. Mainly though it pays for us to come and rig nets during the morning with a view to completing the installation by 11am-12noon, and then supervising play throughout the afternoon until 4 or 5pm, when we begin to dismantle it and pack up.

If access to the venue can be closed at night then it is possible to install nets the previous day which allows for an earlier start and more play time – but this will cost more, particularly if we need to stay overnight. Likewise, this is for a fairly basic setup with three or four low nets and at least one high one, depending on the trees; if there is space for something more ambitious we can field additional staff for an extra £200-£250 each, which includes any extra equipment needed.

If the trees are suitable but need some remedial work (typically removing deadwood, see below) and you'd like us to do it, there may be an additional charge associated with this. We can also rig rope swings in trees if there is a good spot for one, which is always an extremely popular addition.



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Your venue

The environmental requirements for one of our installations are quite specific but also quite common - basically we need a small patch of open woodland. In the rural landscape this is found in places like deer parks and the grounds of stately homes, but in cities it is typical of well-established public parklands and open spaces.

Your trees

What we need is an area of fairly regularly spaced mature trees (3-12m apart), in good condition, with grass or leaf litter underneath and free from additional hazards like rocks, metal railings or tarmac paths. Nettles and ivy etc are fine but brambles or other thorny understory plants are not. Each net needs a square (or four-cornered trapezoid) of trees to support it, and it's best when at least one set of four trees are tall and mature enough to enable us to install additional decks of smaller nets above a large one. This is the ideal setup. An installation is only really worthwhile if it's possible to rig three-four or more nets, either above or alongside one another.

Children in the lowest nets bounce around at 2-4m height so it's also important that we are able to prune away any small branches that are in this space as they can be hazardous. Likewise, any loose or hanging deadwood in the crowns of the trees tends to be dislodged by the movement of people in the nets, so deadwood needs to be removed before we can open the installation to the public. Usually the venues that host our installations have access to arborists who are contracted to maintain their trees and so the remedial work is usually carried out by them, however we are more than capable of doing these minor works ourselves if absolutely necessary. We all have backgrounds in arboriculture so can specify any remedial works in detail following a site visit.

We take our duty of care to the trees we work with very seriously. We aim to leave no visible trace of having been there, and the methods we used to secure nets to the trees are non-invasive and specifically designed not to damage the trees.

Finally, London Plane, Beech and Oak are the best trees to work with for us; however most medium to large native hardwoods are suitable, although willow is no good unless it is extremely robust and mature.



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Age range

Our target age range is 6-13 year olds, who we believe are likely to get the most out of this type of activity. However, younger children are welcome with close parental supervision, and older children are welcome too so long as they can behave appropriately around the younger children. No adults unless accompanied by children! When traffic is high and queues form, we find it can help to run timed sessions for different age groups, usually lasting half an hour each.

Capacity

A typical two-person net installation can accommodate 20-30 children playing safely. The more riggers and play supervisors we bring, the more nets we can install and the greater the number of children we can supervise.

Supervision

Play in our installations must be supervised at all times. Any event that is open-access to the public is difficult to predict how many play supervisors will be required, but we aspire to a ratio of 1-8 as per school journeys. Many children at open access events attend with their parents which makes these calculations a little bit difficult to pin down precisely, as we regard parental supervision as adequate so long as there are Monkey-Do staff present.

If you are able to provide other suitable play supervisors from somewhere else we are very happy to work with competent third parties. Open-access events almost always need more than two play supervisors, so if you only book two of us then you should expect to have to field at least one other play staff to help supervise activities. Our activities are always extremely popular and there have been times in the past when we have been swamped by children. If we don't have adequate supervision in place when this happens the activity ceases to be safe and has to be closed.

Our availability

Weekends can be tricky as they tend to get booked up very fast by festivals etc. We work from March-October each year but obviously the summer is our peak period. The more notice you're able to give, the better.



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First Aid

All of our Directors have recent training in outdoor paediatric first aid, but you will need to supply us with details of the nearest A&E dept and / or means by which to contact any paramedics looking after your event. Bumps, scrapes and tears are very common, but our only broken bones to date have been amongst adults after dark – one of the main reasons we now only allow children to use our equipment.

Safety

Monkey-Do will provide generic and site-specific risk assessments and method statements for any event we attend, and our equipment is subject to a rigorous inspection regime.

Why tree play?

The ongoing ascendance of screen culture and the prevalence of risk-averse attitudes to play provision have led to young people becoming increasingly disconnected from the natural world. This is problematic both for the wellbeing of individuals growing up in our society, but also for the natural world itself, as minimal contact with nature can easily lead to minimal regard for its wonders and value. Close, positive encounters with trees and woodlands help to engender greater understanding, enthusiasm, and respect for the natural environment in the young people who play with Monkey-Do.

Why risky play?

Monkey-Do takes a balanced approach to play safety as advocated by [Play England](#) and others. This approach weighs risks against benefits and ensures that overall goals and objectives of children being able to learn by managing small, calculated risks for themselves are not compromised by excessive risk aversion. Most of the risks and hazards associated with climbing in nets (e.g. falling) are clearly apparent and can be managed effectively and autonomously by children without adult interference. Monkey-Do provides effective controls for risks that cannot be effectively managed by the children themselves (e.g. equipment failure / dead branches dislodged from above etc.) and supervises play at all times to ensure users are playing safely.

Minor injuries such as bumps and grazes are an integral part of learning through wild play and these are an expected feature of any play session. The risk of more serious harm is tightly controlled for however.

